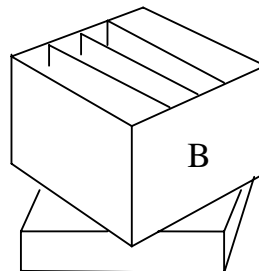
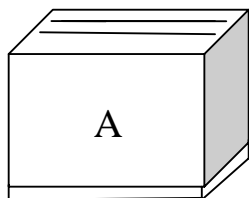


MAKING UP A NUCLEUS

Beekeeping books so often begin describing methods with, '*first find the queen*'. This method does away with that difficult, if not impossible task faced by a beginner.

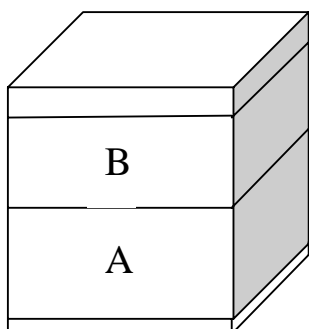
The system described below is mainly aimed for beginners who should each year try to raise a nucleus, either to increase their stocks for the following year, for requeening their existing stock or, and most important, to have a reserve stock should their main and possibly only stock, fail to over winter. A good time to do this is in mid May to mid June as this procedure will introduce fresh breeding space thus helping to reduce the chances of swarms.

Stage 1



Place an empty brood box (B) onto an inverted roof or lift. From the main stock (A) take out two frames of food, one frame of sealed brood and one of eggs. As each frame is taken out brush the bees off over the hive and place the bee-less frames into (B) in this order: food/brood/brood/food. Fill up the space in (A) with empty drawn brood frames or foundation - two either side of the brood nest.

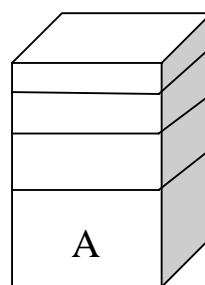
Stage 2



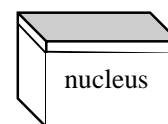
Place the hive back as shown. Put the nucleus (the four frames in the second brood box) over the original brood chamber with a queen excluder separating them. If there are any supers, these can go back on top of the nucleus. The nucleus, when placed upon the original brood chamber is devoid of any bees. What will happen now, is that young nurse bees will come up through the excluder to cover the four frames. Allow a few hours for this to take place, possibly either side of lunch for example.

Stage 3

After this time, the four frames with adhering bees are placed into a nucleus hive. If no nucleus hive is available, the brood box (B) can be set up on its own floor ensuring dummy boards are put either side of the four frames and that the entrance is reduced to a 1/2 inch opening. Feed the nucleus daily with a slow feeder and the bees will raise their own queen. Do not open up again for at least three weeks and then only look for eggs. The nucleus can be placed a few feet away from the parent colony as the nucleus has only young bees that will not be old enough to have undertaken their orientation flights whilst in the original hive. You have thus created a nucleus without the need to first see the queen.



Hive A remaining in original position with some supers.



Better Still

It is possible to select the eggs from which you wish to raise the queens. When selecting the brood frames, choose two that have only sealed brood. Then, cut a two inch square out of one of the frames and into this space, slot in a two inch square of eggs cut out of a frame within the hive from which you wish to raise the queen from. This is known as the 'patch method'. With only this patch of eggs available, this is where the queen cells will be raised. Furthermore, with an abundance of young bees, the queen cells will get more than sufficient attention and queen substance.

David Morris